



## DIVERSIFYING RURAL LIVELIHOODS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

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### THE CHALLENGE

Food insecurity is a serious problem in Southern Africa. The persistence of chronic hunger, malnutrition and threat of famine is unacceptable, and its cost is enormous, particularly in a region reeling from the effects of HIV/AIDS. People in rural areas depend directly and indirectly on agriculture and agriculture-related activities for their food and income. Improvement in their situation will require both farm-level and national/regional interventions.

### USAID PROGRAM

USAID's agricultural program in Southern Africa combats hunger and poverty by strengthening rural economies. It operates under the Presidential **Initiative to End Hunger in Africa (IEHA)**, which links regional and bilateral programs as collaborators advancing policy reform, technology transfer and market development in their respective spheres.

USAID's regional program focuses on three components: production support services, market support services, and famine and disaster early warning and mitigation. Countries covered include: Angola, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa and Zambia. Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland benefit from regional agriculture research and policy advocacy activities.

### INCREASED TRADE OF AGRICULTURAL COMMODITIES



Photo: W. Creighton/DAI

USAID increases trade of high value agricultural commodities through its market support services interventions. As a first step, USAID is helping small scale fruit and vegetable farmers to supply formal markets, such as supermarkets, hotels, and food service companies to improve their quality assurance and quality control of fresh produce. In the area of livestock and seafood, USAID is supporting the adoption of sanitary and quality control systems in processing plants, as well as market development for small scale livestock and seafood associations.

Part of USAID's approach to increasing trade is to promote the development of public-private alliances,

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capitalizing on the expertise and resources of private enterprises in market development.

## **DIVERSIFY AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION**



USAID seeks to diversify the agricultural production of resource poor farmers in order to increase their resilience to economic and climatic crises. The primary tool is the teaching and transfer of low input and conservation farming technologies, such as irrigation technologies, tree fertilization, utilizing improved seed varieties, conservation and use of alternative energy for crop preservation, and adding value to staple and non staple crops.

Other activities to improve productivity for both resource poor and emerging commercial farmers include:

- revitalizing agriculture research networks and consortia in Southern Africa,
- strengthening and harmonizing seed systems among countries in the region, and,
- enhancing the capacity of agriculture policy and advocacy networks to work with public and private sector

## **FAMINE EARLY WARNING**

Since part of food security entails handling crisis situations, USAID supports disaster management and mitigation activities through the Famine Early Warning Network (FEWSNET). This activity coordinates vulnerability assessments, monitors cross

border informal trade, and coordinates famine early warning issues with the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

## **USAID PARTNERS**

Oregon State University  
Iowa State University  
Rutgers University  
International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA)  
International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT)  
Agribusiness in Sustainable Natural African Plant Products (ASNAPP)  
International Center for Research in Agroforestry (ICRAF)  
International Development Enterprises (IDE)  
Michigan State University  
Louisiana State University